

# Disabled People's Rights and Campaign Clothing

From the  
Lorraine Gradwell Collection  
Manchester, UK



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This PDF is in 14 point Arial when printed A4 size, and  
10 point when printed A5, for example the “booklet” print option.  
Other formats are available from the publisher.

## Other books by or concerning Lorraine Gradwell

### **Writings**

More Together Than Ever: disabled women's experiences of involvement in a self-organised group (1998 / 2018)

Life Raft in a Stormy Sea (2015)

### **Poetry**

Sometimes Only Rain Will Do (2014)

### **Others**

Celebration of Lorraine Gradwell (2018)

Lorraine Gradwell - a biography and memoir (forthcoming)

# Background

For a summary of Lorraine's life and activism a good introduction is her obituary in The Guardian [here](#). A longer account as a book is underway.

Lorraine's campaign t-shirts are safely held within the [Archives+](#) service based in Manchester's Central Library. This is the same location as the wider [Disabled People's Archive](#).

These t-shirts are part of her wider collection, mostly papers, and benefit from the skills and knowledge of the council's staff in the [Costume Museum](#) too.

These t-shirts can be loaned to exhibitions that follow The National Archives [standards](#) for safe inter-organisational loans from public archives.

This booklet is essentially a visual and textual catalogue of this part of her wider collection within the archive.

Hopefully the captions for each image of these t-shirts each have sufficient detail for visually impaired readers, and feedback is welcomed.

# Introduction

In some ways the disabled people's movement has come a long way during Lorraine's lifetime of campaigning. As three examples:

Disabled people's rights are studied in schools, including the recent [textbook](#) by the Oxford University Press for GCSE History students at Key Stage 3 which explains the social model, independent living, self-organised groups and civil rights to 11-14 year olds. The introductory timeline includes the Independent Living Fund.

The 11-month exhibition in 2022 / 23 in the centre of Manchester at the People's History Museum – [Nothing About Us Without Us](#) – which employed disabled people as curators and consulted widely on its contents and messages.

The broadcasting on mainstream television by the BBC of a dramatised history of disabled people campaigning to Block Telethon – [Then Barbara Met Alan](#), portrayed by disabled actors.

However, the lived experiences of many disabled people in the UK at the time of writing are ones of increasing

- poverty – repeated benefit cuts from 2010 onwards,
- neglect – the ending of cost-of-living heating payments for Personal Independent Payment (PIP) recipients,
- isolation – the crisis in UK social care with fewer and lower direct payments for personal assistants (PAs).

Despite many substantial social and cultural advances there is still a need for these t-shirts and the campaigning which they vividly document.

So, I'd suggest today's t-shirt collections will include the likes of Disabled People Against Cuts – [DPAC](#).

TB



Image 1:

Description: A black t-shirt with white text on front and left sleeve.

Text: [Front] DAN ~ Disabled Peoples Direct Action Network ~ FREEDOM ~ NOW  
[left sleeve] DAN ~ London 9 '99

Detail: The smaller line of text, [Disabled Peoples Direct Action Network]

[KEY: ~ indicates a new line or block]

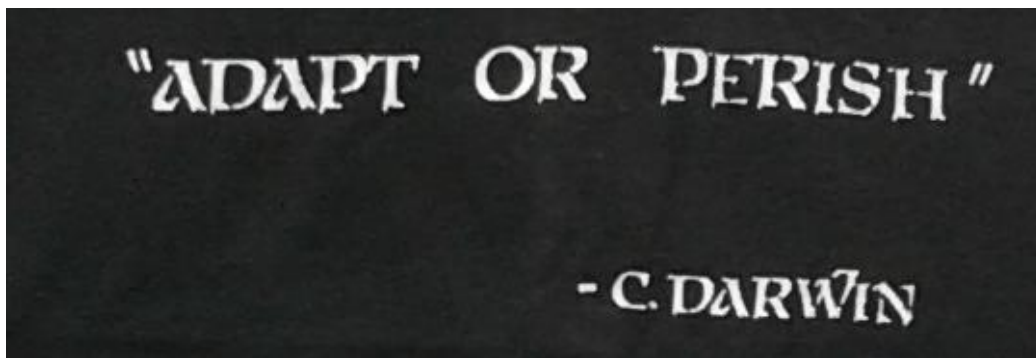


Image 2:

Description: A black t-shirt with a picture and text on the front.

Design: eight silhouette figures, left to right progressing from a monkey to early humans and ending with a wheelchair user

Text: "ADAPT OR PERISH" ~ C. DARWIN

Detail: the text enlarged

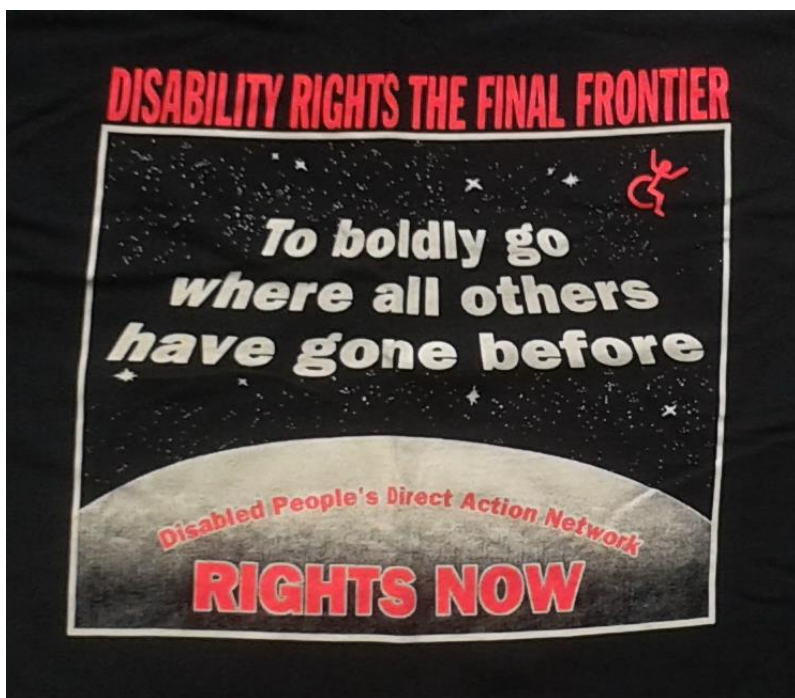


Image 3:

Description: A black t-shirt with a complex colour image on the front, small design on left sleeve

Design: a background showing part of a planet with outer space and stars above, with text in three blocks and a free-floating wheelchair user with arms raised

Text: DISABILITY RIGHTS THE FINAL FRONTIER ~ To boldly go where all others have gone before ~ Disabled People's

Direct Action Network ~ RIGHTS NOW

Detail: the print design enlarged





Image 4:

Description: A black t-shirt with a colour image on the front, small design on left sleeve

Design: Block text each side of a diagonal flash with text on the flash and an outline wheelchair user with their raised arms breaking a chain

Text: [top left] DAN ~ [on flash] DISABLED PEOPLE'S DIRECT ACTION NETWORK ~ [bottom right] WE ~ WILL ~ RIDE!

Detail: the print design enlarged



Image 5:

Description: a black t-shirt with white text and artwork and playful fonts, with a person holding up the start of the text [event of a [Canadian disability arts group](#)]

Text: kickstART 2 ~ Festival ~ September 16-19, 2004

Detail: the print design enlarged



Image 6:

Description: a black t-shirt with a small yellow print design on front upper left

Picture: three links of a chain with the middle link breaking open, with a box surround

Text: TUDA ~ TRADE UNION  
DISABILITY ALLIANCE

Detail: the print design enlarged





Image 7:

Description: the reverse side of the t-shirt in Image 6

Design: three yellow links of a chain with the middle link breaking open



Image 8:

Description: a long sleeve blue sweatshirt with a white design

Design: showing a wheelchair user with raised arms breaking a chain, surrounded by a circle of text

Text: SUPPORT DISABILITY RIGHTS

Detail: the print design enlarged



Image 9:

Description: a black t-shirt with pink text on the front, repeated on the left sleeve

Text: PISS ON PITY

Comment:

Probably the iconic t-shirt and slogan of the movement, certainly in the 1990s.



Image 10:

Description: a blue t-shirt with a small white design on the top left front

Design: showing the outline of the Texas state in the USA with five stars for cities and block text below; the original t-shirt printing is blurred

Text: ADVOCACY INCORPORATED

Detail shows: the print design enlarged

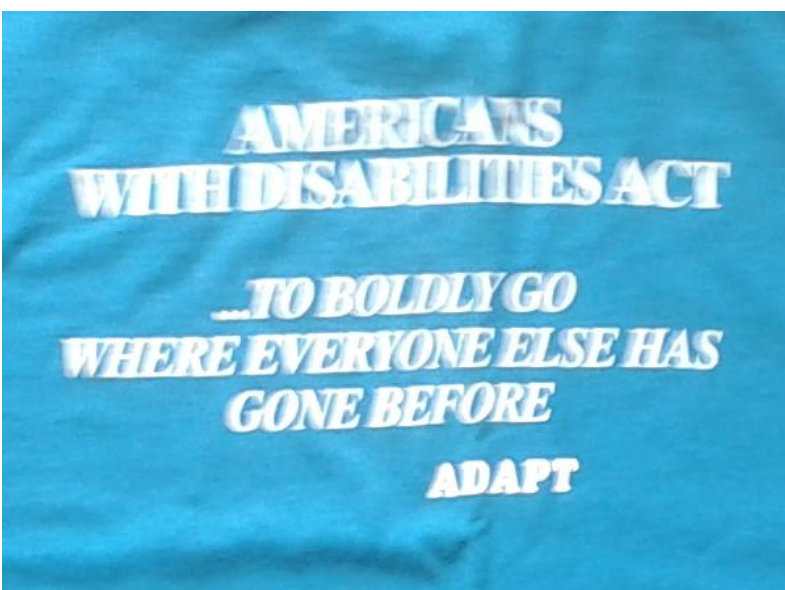


Image 11:

Description: the reverse side of Image 10; the original t-shirt printing is blurred

Text: AMERICANS ~ WITH DISABILITIES ACT ~ TO BOLDLY GO ~ WHERE EVERYONE ELSE HAS ~ GONE BEFORE ~ ADAPT

Detail: the print design enlarged





Image 12:

Description: a red t-shirt with a design printed in black, from a USA campaign

Design: shows a wheelchair user with raised arms breaking a chain, surrounded by a circle of text

Text: FREE OUR PEOPLE ~ ADAPT

Detail: the print design enlarged



Image 13:

Description: a white t-shirt with a complex full-colour design on the front, based on a box with text inside and outside around the four sides, from a USA campaign

Text: [inside box, on red, green and yellow background] RAGING ~ AGAINST ~ THE DYING ~ OF THE LIGHT;

[below] INSTITUTIONS ~ ARE NOT SOLUTIONS! ~ Support H. R. 2020;

[around sides] Remember our friends still ~ trapped inside walls; locked ~ behind doors; lying in halls:

Detail: the print design enlarged

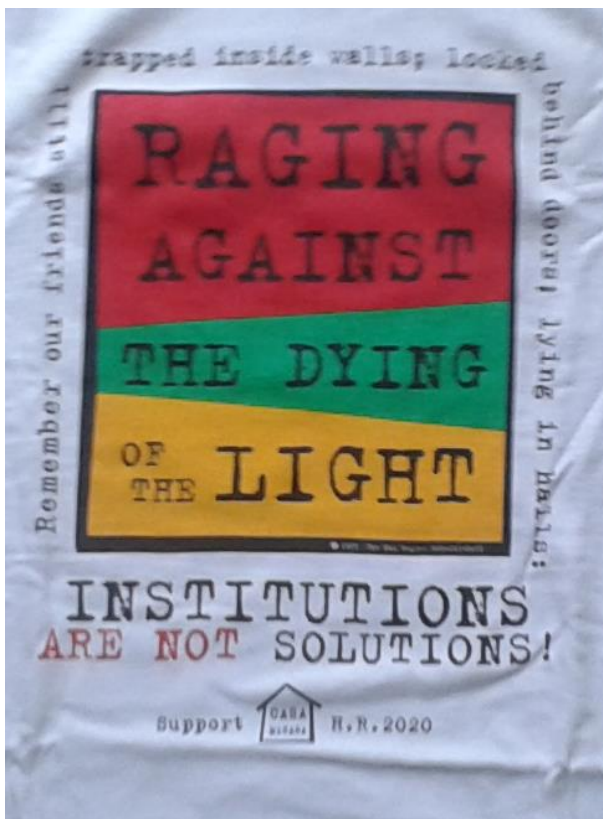




Image 14:

Description: a white t-shirt with a design in black

Design: shows the combined BCOOP logo and DPI logo surrounded by text

Text: RIGHTS ~ NOT CHARITY



Image 15:

Description: a white t-shirt with a design in red and black

Design: text in a range of fonts

Text: Disabled People Demand ~ RIGHTS ~ NOT ~ CHARITY



Image 16:

Description: the reverse of the t-shirt in Image 15, showing the combined BCO DP logo and DPI logo with DISABLED PEOPLES INTERNATIONAL surrounded by further text ...

Text: British Council of Organisations ~ of Disabled People

Detail: the print design enlarged



Image 17:

Description: a white t-shirt with teal text on the upper left front

Text: CRIPS ~ ARE ~ DOING ~ IT...

Detail: the print design enlarged



Image 18:

Description: a white t-shirt with black text on the front

Text: BLOCK TELETHON ~ DISABILITY PRIDE



Image 19:

Description: a white t-shirt with a complex full colour design on the front:

Design: a bottle of champagne diagonal with a set of three balloons above and below; with text on the bottle and balloons

Text: [bottle] GMCDP ~ 10 ~ GMCDP 1985 to 1995 [balloons, small print] Greater ~ Manchester ~ Coalition ~ of disabled ~ people

Detail: the print design enlarged





Image 20:

Description: a white t-shirt with a complex design on the front in blue and yellow

Text: RIGHTS ~ FOR ~ DISABLED ~ PEOPLE ~ NOW! ~ DISABLED

PEOPLE & ~ MANCHESTER ~ MAKING IT HAPPEN

Detail: the lower half of the print design is enlarged



Image 21:

Description: two t-shirts from the collection [images 4 and 15] on mannequins inside a display case at the People's History Museum, Manchester, 2017, with explanatory text panel [see image 22 and end page]

**Lorraine Gradwell (1953-2017)**

was a leading disability rights campaigner with a national profile in Britain.

She helped found two organisations in Manchester, both controlled by disabled people, GMCDP in 1985 and Breakthrough UK in 1997 and was involved in BCODP meetings and in DAN demonstrations.

GMCDP – the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People

BCODP – the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People

DAN – the Disabled people's Direct Action Network.

Lorraine also supported and followed closely the campaigns in the USA for disabled people's rights led by the American group ADAPT, and the work of DPI – the Disabled People's International. She collected a large number of documents from her various campaigns and roles, she also collected 17 T-shirt designs (one a sweatshirt to be precise) from these times.

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Image 22:

Description: [a detail of image 21]

Text: [see end page]

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